

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 INR-11 IO-14 MED-03 NSAE-00

PA-04 RSC-01 SCA-01 SCI-06 USIA-15 PRS-01 CIAE-00

HEW-08 AID-20 DODE-00 CU-05 L-03 DRC-01 (ISO) W

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R 181546Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1740

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, UR

SUBJECT: AMCIT TOURIST GROUP DELAYED IN ROSTOV, FEARS CHOLERA
OUTBREAK THERE

1. CONSOFF WAS CONTACTED LATE AUG. 17 BY PAUL BEST, POLITICAL
SCIENCE PROFESSOR AT CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE, WHO IS CURRENTLY
LEADING TOUR OF 34 AMERICANS THRU USSR UNDER SPUTNIK
AUSPICES.

BEST COMPLAINED SPUTNIK HAD CANCELLED GROUP'S PREPAID STEAMER
TRIP FROM ODESSA TO KAZAN' AND INSTEAD FLOWN GROUP AUG. 15
TO ROSTOV-ON-DON, WHERE GROUP WAS TOLD IT WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN
UNTIL AUG. 21.

2. BEST REQUESTED EMBASSY INTERCEDE WITH SPUTNIK TO ENABLE GROUP
TO LEAVE ROSTOV ASAP. HE SAID GROUP'S DEPARTURE PARTICULARLY URGENT
SINCE HE HAD SEEN NOTICES WARNING OF CHOLERA DANGERS ON ROSTOV
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TS AND HAD BEEN TOLD BY ROSTOV DOCTOR THAT CHOLERA CASES HAD
BEEN REPORTED IN THAT CITY. WHILE SPUTNIK INDICATED TO HIM THAT
REROUTING AND DELAY OF GROUP IN ROSTOV RESULTED FROM NORMAL
TOURIST SNAFU, BEST BELIEVES SPUTNIK HAS EFFECTED QUASI-QUARANTINE.

HIS BELIEF REINFORCED BY SPUTNIK DENIAL OF PERMISSION FOR EITHER
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BEST OR ANOTHER TOUR MEMBER TO FLY TO MOSCOW TO DISCUSS ALTERNATE

ITINERARIES WITH HEADQUARTERS OF SPUTNIK.

3. ASKED IF ANY TOUR-MEMBERS HAD SHOWN DISEASE SYMPTOMS, BEST SAID THREE PERSONS WERE ILL WITH WHAT HE THOUGHT WERE NORMAL TRAVELLERS' COMPLAINTS, BUT THAT SOVIET PHYSICIAN TREATING ONE OF THREE HAD RECOMMENDED TOURIST'S HOSPITALIZATION WHILE REFUSING TO DIAGNOSE ILLNESS. BEST SAID TOURIST, IDENTIFIED AS DONALD GUGLIEMI, AGE 24, HAD DECLINED HOSPITALIZATION SINCE HE FEARED HE WOULD NOT BE RELEASED TO ACCOMPANY GROUP ONWARD. CONSOFF ADVISED BEST SEEK CONTINUING TREATMENT AND DIAGNOSIS IF POSSIBLE, AND REQUESTED HE NOTIFY EMBASSY IF GUGLIEMI'S CONDITION DIAGNOSED OR HE IS HOSPITALIZED.

4. EMBASSY INTENDS APPROACH SPUTNIK AUG. 19 TO REQUEST GROUP BE ALLOWED DEPART ROSTOV ASAP FOR CONTINUATION OF TOUR.

5. COMMENT: JUDGING FROM AGITATED TONE OF CONVERSATION AND CONSOFF'S CHANCE PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCE WITH BEST DURING 1967-68, CONSOFF BELIEVES BEST'S ALARM MAY WELL BE ATTRIBUTABLE AS MUCH TO FRUSTRATION WITH NORMAL SOVIET BUREAUCRATIC QUAGMIRE AS TO ANY REAL DANGER OF CHOLERA QUARANTINE. NO OTHER REPORTS OF CHOLERA OUTBREAK IN ROSTOV AREA HAVE COME TO EMBASSY ATTENTION, ALTHOUGH SINCE ROSTOV IS MAJOR PORT THIS POSSIBILITY CANNOT BE EXCLUDED. EMBASSY WILL IMMEDIATELY ADVISE IF ANY FURTHER EVIDENCE OF CHOLERA IS REPORTED BY BEST OR OTHER SOURCE.
STOESSEL

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA 2 AS RECEIVED.

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